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ABSTRACT

New certification standards adopted by the Washington State Board of Education in 1971 were designed to develop teacher education programs that ensure the highest quality of professional performance by teachers prepared within them. Teacher education programs under the new standards are approved by the State Board of Education only when three groups (personnel of colleges/universities involved in training teachers, school district or private school staffs, and professional association members closest to teaching) have developed a program cooperatively and are exercising equal authority. The consortium of these agencies, whose structure is designed to ensure comprehensive participation, must secure involvement of the various constituents who are concerned about high quality teaching. The objective for teachers must focus on their actual performance (competence) as teachers. Once these competencies are identified, the actual training program must be structured to produce teachers who possess them. The new standards decentralize responsibility and accountability for preparation and the outcomes of preparation. The cooperative approach helps marshall resources of the various agencies, gives trainees more preservice experience in the schools, helps screen out those who should not continue within teacher preparation, and offers realistic preparation for the actual work of the teacher. (Author/JA)

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A NEW APPROACH TO TEACHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Parents sometimes ask, "Does a teaching certificate assure a quality teacher for my children?" "Just how effective are present teacher certification procedures in screening out incompetents?" New certification standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1971 were designed to develop teacher education programs that will ensure the highest quality of professional performance by teachers prepared within them.

Teacher education programs under the new standards will be approved by the State Board of Education only when those three groups of people (personnel of colleges/universities involved in training teachers, school district or private school staffs, and professional association members closest to teaching) have developed a program cooperatively and are exercising equal authority. An organization, called a consortium, of these agencies must secure involvement of the various constituents who are concerned about high quality teaching (parents, students, college students, college professors in departments other than education, members of specialized professional associations, etc.).

The consortium structure is designed to ensure comprehensive participation. The objectives for teachers must focus on actual performance (competence) as a teacher. Once these competencies are identified, the actual training program must be structured to produce teachers who possess them. New standards insist that programs recognize the individually differing needs of teacher trainees; and, likewise, that teachers be prepared to recognize pupil differences and establish learning situations that consider students as individuals.

The new standards decentralize responsibility and accountability for preparation and the outcomes of preparation. They create a more open system and encourage innovation. The cooperative approach helps marshall resources of the various agencies, gives trainees more pre-service experience in the schools, helps screen out those who should not continue with teacher preparation, and offers realistic preparation for the actual work of a teacher.

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The Consortium

Parity, shared authority and responsibility, is to exist among agencies which combine to form the consortium. The three agencies forming the consortium are school organizations (school districts or private schools), professional associations (the local negotiating group), and colleges/universities.

Each consortium agency is to involve its constituents. School organizations (districts or private schools) will involve parents, students, and citizens. Departments of education in colleges and universities will involve other departments and college students. General professional associations in the school districts must involve specialized groups (e.g., Washington State Mathematics Council).

Figure 1 illustrates the parity relationships among the three agencies in a consortium and how involvement is secured from the respective constituents of each of the three agencies:

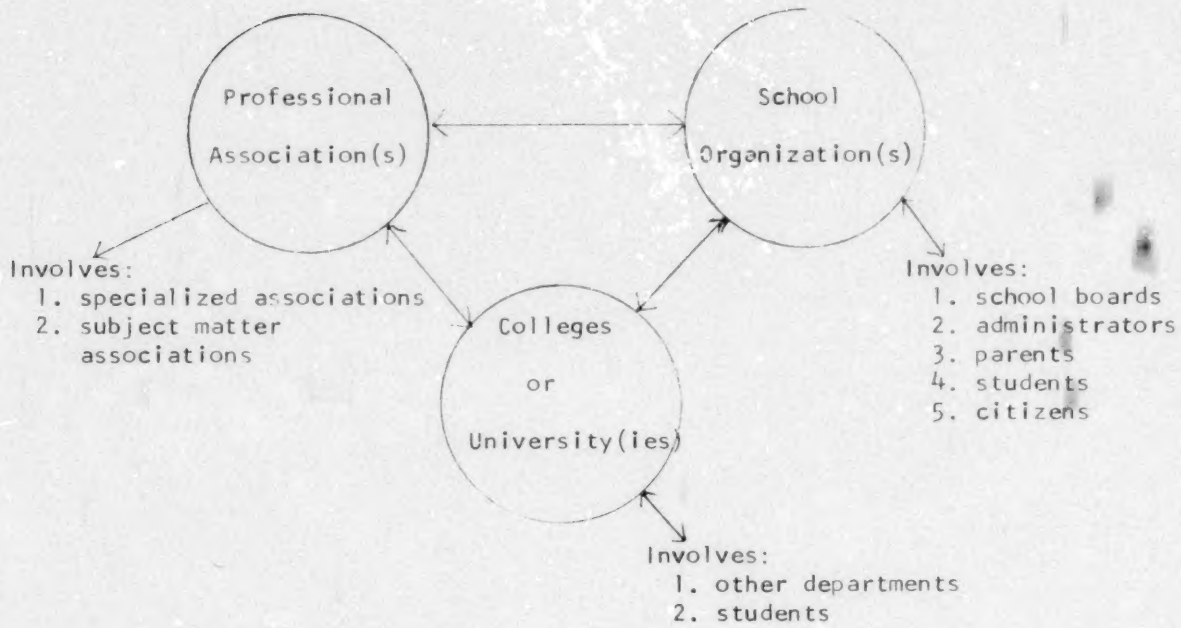

Fig. 1--A Teacher Education and Certification Agency Under 1971 Guidelines and Standards

The Program

After the consortium has been formed, the heart of its task lies in developing the various programs. Each program must identify outcomes (objectives) in terms of competencies and levels of performance rather than in terms of courses completed or degrees obtained. Training is to be individualized and offer alternate routes from which the trainee may select those most compatible with his learning style. New standards allow for shortening or lengthening training time in terms of the individual's needs and abilities.

More first-hand experience with children seems essential if actual teaching performance is to be affected. Therefore, more training will be provided in actual school situations than formerly. The trainee is actively involved and utilizes feedback from his pupils and supervisors as he improves his professional competence.

Teacher training under the new standards stresses continuous, career-long development of teaching competence. This approach aims to stimulate trainees to evaluate their individual needs and search for appropriate experiences in order to acquire new teaching competencies. Such attitudes and skills should persist throughout the professional career of the teacher. An apparent weakness in former programs was the all too prevalent assumption that professional training was completed with receipt of the teaching certificate.

Figure 2 depicts eight broad phases of program development within a consortium. After the consortium has been formed (Phase I), has established a policy board (Phase II) which provides for parity among the three agencies, and has adopted basic policies (Phase III), the process of program development proceeds (Phases IV - VIII).

The Consortium	Phase I: Consortium Formation
	Phase II: Establishment of Policy Board
	Phase III: Adoption of Policies
The Preparation Program	Phase IV: Program Development
	Phase V: State Board Approval
	Phase VI: Program Implementation
	Phase VII: Certification
	Phase VIII: Evaluation

Fig. 2--Phases in Program Development

The program developed in Phase IV is presented to the State Board of Education for review and approval (Phase V). Upon formal approval by the State Board, the consortium proceeds with implementation (Phase VI). When candidates complete their training, the consortium recommends that they be certified (Phase VII). New standards provide for continuing evaluation of consortium programs (Phase VIII).

Levels of Certification

The new certification plan moves the trainee through three stages of preparation (Preparatory, Initial, and Continuing levels of certification) as shown in Figure 3:

Types of Certificates	Teacher	Administrator	Educational Staff Associate
Levels of Certificates	1. Preparatory	1. Preparatory	1. Preparatory
	2. Initial	2. Initial	2. Initial
	3. Continuing	3. Continuing	3. Continuing

Fig. 3--Types and Levels of Certificates

Three types of certificates (teacher, administrator, and educational staff associate) will be issued. The educational staff associate certificate authorizes service in roles of specialized assistance to the learner, the teacher, the administrator, and/or the educational program.

Washington State Teacher Certification: Present and Future

The State Board of Education adopted a motion to implement the new standards promptly. The former standards (1961) continue to apply. The initiative to form a consortium can begin with any person or group. At the present time, 68 potential consortia have been identified in the state. Programs within these consortia are in various stages of planning. It is anticipated that a number will be presented for approval this year.

The trend in other states also is toward similar performance-based patterns. Progress in Washington State is being carefully observed. In an open system which capitalizes upon strengths within the separate developing consortia, it is difficult to predict clearly how teacher education will in fact appear in the years ahead. It does seem clear that teacher education programs envisioned in the new standards promise to fulfill expectations of the public for teachers of its children beyond any plan yet tried.